



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 2, 2013

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## **Navajo Nation Council votes down legislation to remove the Tribally Designated Housing Entity from the Navajo Housing Authority**

**WINDOW ROCK** – The 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council considered Legislation No. 0011-13 last Friday, which sought to transfer the Tribally Designated Housing Entity from the Navajo Housing Authority to the proposed Navajo Nation Housing Commission.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels), advocated for the establishment of the Navajo Nation Housing Commission to act as the manager of funding received through the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act.

“I come forth with this legislation to address the growing frustration with Navajo Housing Authority,” said Delegate Hale. “NHA will still exist, but as a separate sub-contracting enterprise.”

The Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996 reorganized housing assistance provided to Native Americans through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Council Delegate Elmer Begay (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) expressed concern over the possibility of increased intervention by government entities in the affairs of the Nation’s enterprises.

“In order to start moving forward, we must stop this habit of always being in control,” Delegate Begay said. “The Council must think about what the chapters want.”

Although some delegates spoke in opposition of the legislation, others were not hesitant to express their frustration with NHA.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) expressed dissatisfaction with a lack of funding for housing in his chapters.

“Some chapters have been fortunate to receive housing. However my chapters have not received housing for 50 years,” said Delegate Tsosie. “NHA’s lack of performance has put the Nation in a funding crisis.”

Delegate Tsosie added that Navajo people have grown accustomed to inadequate NHA subdivisions, asserting his support for the legislation.

Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin) cautioned that the removal of TDHE from NHA would signify instability within the Nation's government.

"Some chapters are extremely proactive when working and planning with NHA," Nez said. "We should not punish those chapters by jeopardizing these funds, especially during the sequestration."

Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) stated that NHA is not creative when expending funds, noting that he has been waiting for such a legislation to come before the full Council.

"If we do not make change, it might be perceived as the Council approving the reversion of federal funds. I cannot allow that," Delegate Pete said.

Council Delegate LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) inquired as to how the proposed housing commission would work with chapters to expend funds.

"NHA has worked with Northern Navajo Agency chapters to explain what they have to do to see development," said Delegate Bates. "I'm unsure if the new commission can do that."

Due to numerous concerns over the proposed plan of operation, Council Delegate Mel Begay (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a') attempted to table the legislation. The motion failed with a 8-12 vote.

Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) encouraged her colleagues to support the proposed housing commission and to move forward in a positive direction, in light of the recent conflict with NHA.

"We have tried to work with NHA, but instead they choose to file lawsuits against the Council," said Delegate Benally. "The Council has the power to do great things for our people; the commission is one of those things."

After a lengthy discussion, Council voted down the legislation with a 9-11 vote.

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